

# India Now

January, 1981

Monthly News Publication of Indian People's  
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father  
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

Source: Sukhwant Hundal's personal collections

## Security Ordinance Becomes Law

Detention without trial became a law once again on December 16 when the National Security Bill was passed in Parliament by a vote of 190 to 74. The bill embodies the features of the National Security Ordinance proclaimed in September. Despite strong protests by the opposition, highlighted by a walkout of almost the entire opposition during the debate, the majority enjoyed by the ruling party in the Lok Sabha ensured that the bill would be rubber-stamped into law.

Home Minister Zail gave the usual assurances during the debate that the measure would not be used against political opponents. The worth of these assurances can be gauged from the fact that barely a week after its passage, the law has been sued to arrest thousands of farmers and opposition politicians in Maharashtra demonstrating against the

government's agricultural price policies.

In an editorial condemning the bill, the Indian Express said, "There is absolutely no guarantee that the current bill will not undergo the same transformation [as the earlier Maintenance of Internal Security Act] as the discontent at the ruling party's inability to provide a government that works becomes widespread."

### AMNESTY EXPRESSES CONCERN

In its annual report, Amnesty International, the London-based organization concerned with human rights throughout the world, has expressed concern over Indian laws providing for detention without trial. The report covers a period before the recent National Security Ordinance.

Amnesty also records the "persistence of serious police

brutality giving rise to occasional deaths in police custody and the holding of several political prisoners awaiting trial for a number of years."

The report also referred to allegations of torture of some of the 48 army officers who had been arrested in Jammu and Kashmir on charges of espionage.

Amnesty International is investigating the cases of four political prisoners on trial in Kerala, two in Bihar and three in Andhra.

Amnesty also expressed the hope that the important direc-

(continued on p.12)

## INSIDE

Solar Eclipse Can Be Enlightening	3
Oil Policy Favors Multinationals	7
Silicosis Kills Slate Workers	8
Bombay Beedi Workers on Strike	8
Court Criticizes Handcuffing	9
Ex-Judge Joins Civil Liberties Union	9
Brezhnev in India	10

## Opposition Protests Pre-Session Ordinances Even Speaker Disapproves

Opposition members of Parliament have protested the issuing of ordinances when Parliament is not in session. When Parliament reconvened at the end of November, the minister for Parliamentary Affairs laid ten inter-session ordinances on the table.

Ram Jethmalani of Bharatiya Janata protested the "fraud" on the constitutional powers of the President to issue ordinances when Parliament was not in session. Calling on the Speaker to disapprove the government action, Jethmalani said the ordinances were a threat to the parlia-

mentary form of government.

The Speaker, Balram, also expressed his disapproval. However, he allowed the minister to lay the ordinances on the table, noting that the government had announced it would bring forward bills to replace the ordinances. Members could express their views when these bills came up, he observed.

It has been noted that an ordinance can become an accomplished fact before the bill is even discussed. The ordinance relating to the takeover of Maruti is an instance.

## Demonstrators Protest Brezhnev Visit



Police clashed with Afghan demonstrators protesting Mr. Brezhnev's visit.

Soviet President Brezhnev was greeted by demonstrators during his four-day visit to New Delhi, in contrast to the welcome he received during his 1973 visit. On December 8, demonstrators protesting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced a detour by the Brezhnev motorcade as it reached central Delhi. More than 500 Indians and Afghan exiles gathered in the busy commercial center of Connaught Place and denounced the visit and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The demonstrators were lathi-charged by the police; five, including three Afghan women, were injured. Police arrested about 90 demonstrators. The police also repulsed demonstrators who tried to storm a Soviet information center and the Brezhnev motorcade bypassed the area to reach the heavily fortified Rashtrapathi Bhavan.

A similar demonstration took place outside the Soviet embassy later, where 200

(continued on p.10)

## 15,000 Arrested in Maharashtra Farmers Protest

## Opposition Charges Misuse of New Detention Law

Unofficial sources claim that as many as 15,000 farmers were arrested by the Maharashtra government in the latest phase of their agitation against the agricultural procurement price policies. The farmers have been demanding higher prices for sugar cane, cotton, onions and other crops most of which are purchased by government agencies. To highlight their protest, the farmers had embarked on a 300-mile-march from Jalgaon to Nagpur, the winter capital of the state, where the state legislature was scheduled to meet on December 26. Half way through the march, which grew significantly in numbers as it progressed, the Cong(I) state government of

A.R.Antulay decided to stop the marchers by arresting them first under an order banning processions and public meetings and later through the newly passed preventive detention law. Arrested along with the farmers were several prominent opposition party leaders including Y.B.Chavan, former defense minister, and Sharad Pawar, former chief minister of Maharashtra. Chavan described the government's action as a "sheer act of dictatorship," while other leaders called it "repressive." The latest incidents followed earlier "non-political" demonstrations led by Sharad Joshi in which farmers, demanding higher sugar-cane and onion

prices, blockaded road and rail traffic at Nasik. Joshi called off the agitation after receiving "assurances" from Antulay. Opposition parties have accused Joshi of selling out.

Similar protests by farmers in Tamil Nadu in late December also led to several thousand arrests by the AIADMK government of M.G.Ramachandran. Significantly, in both states, the preventive detention law was widely used in making the arrests despite assurances by Indira Gandhi's government that the law was only meant for "antisocial" elements such as blackmarketeers, hoarders and smugglers.

## Assam: Struggles Intensify, Protesters Oppose Cong(I) State Govt

The 14-month-old agitation in Assam has intensified following the installation of a Congress(I) state government on December 6 with Anwara Taimur, a well-known follower of Indira Gandhi, as the chief minister. On December 29, a general strike was observed throughout the state to protest the deaths of eight demonstrators killed by police firing. The strike led to a shutdown of commercial activity, government offices and schools. Police and paramilitary forces fired on demonstrators in Nowgong and carried out lathi-charges and teargassing in the towns of Gauhati, Sadiya and Golaghat. Over a hundred people are reported to have been injured.

In New Delhi, Indira Gandhi threatened a further intensification of repressive measures by the state machinery saying that the government had "shown a great deal of patience" over the disturbances in Assam but that "divisive elements would not be tolerated." Students leading the Assam protests reacted strongly to the installation of the Taimur government by pledging total "non-cooperation" with the regime. A strike was observed on December 7 against the regime which disrupted communication and transport and also led to a complete blackout in much of the northeastern region when power station workers joined

the strike.

Faced with the failure of her attempts to resolve the issues raised by the Assam movement, Indira Gandhi, in the view of observers, is simultaneously attempting to intensify repressive methods and trying to bribe a section of the leadership into submission by accepting favors from the Congress(I) party. Observers point out that the Congress(I) had a strength of only eight out of a total of 126 in the state legislature and has apparently increased this to 52, although this is yet to be tested on the floor of the Assembly. The creation of a Cong(I) state government is expected by the center to lead to a more conducive atmosphere for making political deals than was possible under President's rule and to open the doors to patronage funds to entice some of the protesters into abandoning the movement. In this way, Cong(I) hopes to benefit from whatever compromise solution to the "immigrant" question is finally adopted.

The intensification of repression is shown by the night-long police raid in early December on the Cotton College Hostel in Gauhati when about 500 students were mercilessly beaten in their won beds, their belongings seized and their rooms ransacked on the pretext of a "weapons search."

## 3 Dead, Many Injured in Orissa Clashes

Violent student demonstrations have recently occurred in Orissa, resulting in the death of at least three and injuries to many. Although it is not clear which political forces are behind the present agitation, it most definitely has a strong anti-Marwari thrust.

The Marwaris are a business community who have migrated from Rajasthan. They are concentrated mainly in the western part of the state. According to newspaper reports, the present agitation against the Marwaris was sparked off by a minor conflict between some students in Sambalpur district who were collecting donations to help flood victims and some local Marwari businessmen. The details of this conflict are not clear from available reports.

The agitation soon spread to nearby districts, taking a particularly violent turn in Bolangir district where one person was killed as a result of police firing and many were arrested.

The Congress(I) government of the state has put the blame on the opposition for fomenting the student unrest. It has, however, been reported that the agitation in Bolangir is led by Congress(I).

A 24-hour strike on December 5 came on the heels of a pronouncement by the state chief minister that the government might have to use the

National Security Ordinance to maintain law and order. The strike was called by the Student Action Committee to demand the release of students arrested in earlier demonstrations. Many bank and public employees also joined the strike. Opposition parties also lent their support.

Police opened fire without warning in four towns. According to the Press Trust of India, this resulted in three deaths and nearly a dozen injuries. However, reports from Cuttack indicate several dozens of injured in Cuttack hospitals alone.

The situation was most serious in the steel town of Rourkela where a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed. But the demonstrators paid no heed to it and responded to police firing by putting up road blocks and throwing stones.

The agitation is not confined to the urban areas but has made inroads into remote areas such as Dhenkanal and Phulbani as well.

Although reliable news is hard to come by, it seems the agitation is the result of an interplay of Oriya nationalism with economic hardships. The future orientation of the agitation and the government's response could shape political developments in the state for some time to come.

## V-C Orders JNU Closure Student Union Rivalry Alleged

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was ordered closed on November 16 by Professor Mahale, the acting Vice-Chancellor. The closure followed a student agitation protesting the suspension of Rajan James, a Ph.D. student on charges of using abusive language and resorting to violent gestures against Mahale.

James's confrontation with Mahale followed the order of expulsion from the hostel of a fifth semester M.Phil. student, A. Mathialagan, on the ground that he had not registered for that semester and had not paid the mess dues. According to the university, a common malpractice is for persons with full-time jobs outside to register for M.Phil. of Ph.D., and sublet their allotted hostel rooms to outsiders. Mess charges at JNU are Rs 140 a month, claimed by officials to be the lowest in the city.

James, along with some oth-

er students, is alleged to have confronted Mahale on his way to receive a French delegation. Later, he is alleged to have barged into the room where the French were being received by Mahale and shouted at him. Then Mahale suspended James. That night, James is alleged to have led a torchlight demonstration to Mahale's house and broken windows. Demonstrations continued in the residential area, leading to the closure of the university.

According to the Hindu, one reason for the agitation is the rivalry between CPM-backed Students Federation of India (SFI) and other groups. In recent elections, SFI acquired control over the students' union while James, running on the Democratic Students Front ticket, lost the presidentship narrowly. In the agitation, James is reportedly backed by Congress(I) as well as by other parties such as CPI and Janata.

## BRIEFS

### ANTULAY ATTACKS INDEPENDENCE OF COURTS

Maharashtra's chief minister, A.R. Antulay, has expressed opposition to the notion of the courts being independent of the government. Speaking at the National Integration Council meeting in New Delhi, he disagreed with those who want the present form of parliamentary democracy to continue. He said the present system was not suitable because under it the courts could strike down laws made by Parliament and the government could not implement policies for the welfare of the people.

Antulay said, "We should have a system where the law courts would not come in the way of the government implementing the policies for the people." This will be possible "if we correct the present system, or bring about some changes in it wherein Parliament's action would not be open to the scrutiny of the courts."

Speaking elsewhere, Antulay strongly endorsed the presidential system of government. He viewed the recent victory of Cong(I) in 10 out of 15 assembly by-elections as a mandate for a change in the system.

### PATWARI: WHAT DID I DO WRONG?

The former Tamil Nadu governor, Prabhudas Patwari, says that nobody had ever told him what wrong he had done to be removed from office.

Speaking on his experiences as governor, at the Rotary Club of Ahmedabad, Patwari said all through his three-and-a-half year term as governor, he had offended neither the president, Sanjiva Reddy, nor the prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in any way.

"Raj Bhavan is not a hotel but the residence of the governor where he has to stay in a

manner befitting his beliefs," the ex-governor said, defending the non-serving of liquor, non-vegetarian food and cigarettes at his mansion. He said that as many as 3500 to 4000 foreign and Indian guests had stayed at the Raj Bhavan during his tenure and none of them had insisted on having liquor or non-vegetarian food.

### STATE ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTIONS

Congress(I) won ten out of 15 seats in the by-elections held for seven state assemblies in late November.

Three Congress chief ministers - A.R. Antulay of Maharashtra, J.B. Patnaik of Orissa and Jagannath Pahadia of Rajasthan - were among the ten victorious Cong(I) candidates. Each of the chief ministers stood from "safe" seats vacated by Cong(I) MLAs to allow them to seek election.

Two seats each went to Lok Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party, and one to Janata.

Polling was heavy, about 62%, and peaceful except in Rajasthan. Ten reporters going around in the Weir assembly constituency, where the chief minister stood, were allegedly beaten up by Cong(I) supporters. One reporter was seriously injured.

### BANSI LAL ON WAY OUT?

Bansi Lal, former defense minister and crony of Sanjay Gandhi, has been excluded from the Haryana Pradesh Congress(I) Executive Committee. Very few of his supporters are said to be in the 20-member body.

The president, other office-bearers and most of the executive members are supporters of chief minister Bhajan Lal, who thus appears to have eliminated, at least temporarily, Bansi Lal from the party organization. In this, Bhajan Lal is reported to have had the help of Rao Birendra Singh, union agriculture minister, and Dalbir Singh, union minister of state for petroleum.

## Second Successive Drought in Rayalaseema

For the second year in a row, drought conditions prevail the districts of Rayalaseema in Andhra. All that is visible is stunted and withered crops and large extents of dry land.

"Even the jowar crop has dried up. When jowar dries up on the land - it needs the least quantity of water - then every other crop is lost," says a farmer near Nandyal in Kurnool district. Jowar has dried up throughout Rayalaseema - Kurnool, Anantapur and Cuddapah.

What has hurt many farmers particularly is that this year's drought is the second in a row. Many of them had sunk all their capital last year into crops that yielded little returns. They had to resort to borrowing this year but lost

that too.

Farmworkers and small peasants are moving towards the KC canal or the high level canal systems to find jobs as farmhands during harvests, pushing the wages down. But officially none of the district administrations would concede that there was any migration of the farm labor this year.

Another common feature in Rayalaseema is the dim prospects of a rabi crop this year. Normally tanks are the only reservoirs of sustenance for the second crop but they are dry. In kharif itself, the entire 30,000 acres were fallow in Kurnool district; 150,000 acres under tanks have been fallow in Anantapur; in Cuddapah district, there is hardly enough water for even cattle to lap at.

## Wynad: New District in Kerala

Mukundan C Menon

Kerala got a new district on November 1 - the hilly region of Wynad, bordering Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Until now, north Wynad was in Cannanore and south Wynad in Kozhikode.

Wynad came under British rule in early 19th century, the last area in the region to do so. Pazhasi Raja led his adivasi guerrillas against the British from 1799 to 1805; at the Pulpalli war in 1805, he opted to commit suicide rather than surrender.

Following World War II, there was an influx of settlers from the plains, mostly Travancore Christians. This influx led to changes in the Wynad society. Until then, most of the adivasis (paniyar, kurumar, kattumaickan, kurichiar, pulayan, adiyar, kadan, kandu-vadiyan, thachanandan, moo-

pan, etc.) were virtual slaves. The slave market during the annual festival at Valliyurkavu temple, from where the landlords purchased both male and female adivasi slaves, ceased to exist only in the 1960s.

Other influences came as well: the Punnapra-Vylar peasant struggle of late 1950's; later, Naxalbari found its first echo in Kerala in Wynad in the form of attacks on police stations in Pulpalli and Kuttiadi. Verghese, a leader of the adivasis, was tortured to death in the Tirunelli forests.

Other settlers followed the Christians - Malabar Muslims, Tamil Nadu Gounders and chettiars. Wynad's population jumped from 170,000 in 1951 to 414,000 in 1971, and is projected to be 550,000 in 1981. By 1971, adivasis were only a fifth of the population.

## First Harijan Judge for the Supreme Court

The central government has appointed the first Harijan judge on the Supreme Court. He is Appajee Varadarajan, a Madras High Court judge. Appointed at the same time was Baharul Islam, retired chief justice of the Gauhati High Court.

Justice Varadarajan is 60 years old and hails from North Arcot district. He was born in Jolarpet and attended the Municipal High School, Tirupattur and Voorhees College, Vellore, where he got his law degree in 1943.

After practicing as a lawyer for a brief period, Justice Varadarajan served as District munsif, district and sessions judge, presiding officer of the labor court in Madurai and then the Industrial Tribunal. He became a judge on the Madras High Court in 1973, the first Harijan to do so.

## Vajpayee Challenges Zail Singh

Atal Bihari Vajpayee has challenged Home Minister Zail Singh to prove his charge that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was involved in communal riots. Vajpayee said that if Zail Singh could not provide evidence to support his charge, his statement should be withdrawn immediately. He demanded that the names of BJP members who were involved be disclosed and the public informed of whether they were being prosecuted.

Vajpayee also deplored the fact that ten ordinances had been issued during the inter-session period. He said this constituted misuse of ordinance-making powers.

Vajpayee also said he was opposed to the formation of a government in Assam. Such a government would consist of defectors, he said.

Vajpayee recalled that after the last elections, Congress(I) had only eight

(continued on p.8)

## Solar Eclipse: An Enlightening Experience

Dr Vivek Monteiro

[A number of groups in India are trying to bring scientific ideas closer to large numbers of people, especially the poor. Following is an impression of the work of one such group, based in Bombay, on the total solar eclipse last February. Ed.]

On February 16, 1980, the first total eclipse of the sun occurred after a period of 82 years. Traditionally an eclipse has always been considered an evil event in India and in many other parts of the world. This was no exception. On the day of this one, the streets of Bombay were empty of people and traffic. The mass media had done a good job of reinforcing the fears of the people by publishing all kinds of scientific-sounding statements. The government had issued a statement in the morning newspapers in bold letters warning people to stay indoors and under no circumstances to look at the sun.

Yet in the sea of fear and ignorance, there was an island of brightness in Pestom Sagar, an average slum in Chembur, a suburb of Bombay. There a group of people of the Jan Vidnyan Kendra had set up a jatra - fair - with a number of exhibits. There were photographs from space of the shadow of the moon on the earth, a working model of the earth-moon-sun system to show how the eclipse takes place, a series of picture posters on the subjects "We and the Sky," "Man and Astronomy." The centerpiece was the *surva* booth, a tent with its entire roof made of metallized polyester sheets which attenuated the intensity of the sunlight to a safe level. The same sheets had been used to make solar goggles by stapling a piece between two computer cards.

A few minutes before the eclipse was to begin, there were only about a hundred people near the tent. Most of them were looking at the sun expectantly through the solar goggles, a few children were playing with little pieces of mirrored glass projecting images of the sun on the walls of the buildings opposite the slum. A long queue had formed in front of the tent. As the eclipse began, the people began to file through the tent. Many of them then went home and brought out those who had stayed inside.

The Jan Vidnyan volunteers then asked the people gathered there to join them in the breaking of the taboo against eating food during the eclipse. They bought a lot of bananas and biscuits. These were distributed among the people who realized that this was a symbolic event and had to be handled with dignity. They asked the volunteers to start and several hundred of the slum residents solemnly joined them. The volunteers then raised slogans against those that propagate blind faith and fear among the people and the crowd responded heartily.

An old taboo had been broken. What psychological effect this could have is hard to specify but clearly the fact virtually the entire slum turned out to watch the eclipse when millions all over the country hid in their houses shows that the common people are as conservative as many believe. Pestom Sagar is not an unusual slum; it is very similar to thousands of slums spread all over Bombay.

(abridged from an article in Science Today, May 1980)

## New Satellite Link

India's communications are moving forward. Satellites are going to be used for transmitting telephone conversations within the country. Indira Gandhi inaugurated, on November 15, the first earth station for such use at Sikandarabad in UP (near Delhi).

Each earth station consists of a tall microwave tower (132 feet high) and a large antenna (36 feet in diameter). All the antennas are pointed at a satellite, Intelsat IV, which is 22,000 miles up in the sky. The satellite is geostationary, which means it moves with the earth so it is stationary as far as the earth is concerned. Each earth station can transmit by beaming messages to the satellite.

The first two earth stations are at Sikandarabad and Madras. The plan is to set up 26 more earth stations. The main stations will be at Delhi (Sikandarabad), Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Shillong. Eight primary stations will be at Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Ernakulam, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jullundur, Lucknow and Patna. Fifteen remote stations will be at Agartala, Aizawi (Mizoram),

Bhuj, Car Nicobar, Gangtok (Sikkim), Imphal, Itanagar, Jodhpur, Kavaratti (Lakshadweep), Kohima, Leh (Ladakh), Minicoy, Panjim, Port Blair (Andamans) and Srinagar. The remote stations are located in far corners of the country.

Besides the 28 stations, one earth station that can be transported by road and two that can be carried by air will be readied for use in emergencies like floods and other natural calamities.

The stations will be located away from metropolitan towns to avoid possible interference from terrestrial microwave links. The circuits derived via the satellite are extended to nearby metropolitan towns by microwave links or coaxial cables for integration with the national telecommunication network.

The stations will be maintained by Post and Telegraphs.

The satellite Intelsat IV has been rented from the US for five years. It is hoped that before the end of that period, India will place its own satellite, INSAT, in orbit for such communications.

## Blinding of Prisoners— Tip of an Iceberg

The revelations of the medieval tortures inflicted on 87 undertrial prisoners in Bhagalpur Jail by the Bihar police have justifiably caused extreme revulsion in the country. The blinding of human beings by gouging out their eyes and pouring acid in the sockets is no doubt an extreme act, even for the Indian police whose record of torture and cruelty towards suspects and undertrials in colonial as well as independent India is long and bloodstained. However, no one should be under the illusion that these acts, horrible as they are, are in any way isolated or are carried out without the knowledge and sanction of high government officials and leaders. In fact, brutality is the normal way in which the police routinely undertake investigative work especially when the suspects come from the lower classes.

The claim is made by the authorities that the police in India have to work under very difficult conditions and that occasional atrocities have to be overlooked for fear of demoralizing the police. Self-serving and atrocious as such a claim is, in a society that calls itself democratic, it nevertheless reveals a deeper political truth. In a feudal setup, the oppression practiced by the landlords and money-lenders has to be carried out by the lower classes into accepting the social order. The police, who are the appointed guardians of "law and order" are merely the instruments by which feudal property relations, in their widest sense, are safeguarded. Police atrocities, in this sense, are the most concentrated and organized expression of a brutality which is endemic to society as a whole. The countless brutalities and killings witnessed over the last two decades, from roasting 45 Harijans to death in a burning hut at

Kilvenmani to shooting adivasis for stealing one kilogram of grain at Patilwadi-Mhasavadi, and the complete failure of the judicial-legal system to take any action against the perpetrators, is concrete evidence, if any is needed, that such atrocities are part and parcel of the fabric of society.

The reaction of the Bihar gentry, who have defended in no uncertain terms the blinding of the prisoners by the police as "necessary," reveals clearly the connection between social and order and police brutality; in any case, their reaction is more honest than the crocodile tears being shed by Indira Gandhi or Zail Singh who have not hesitated to defend similar brutalities, especially against political opponents, when their interests warranted it.

While the current incidents have focused attention on Bihar, the record of the police from Manipur to Maharashtra and Kashmir to Kerala is hardly any different. In fact, the relatively crude methods of torture used in Bihar have been considerably refined using modern technology by the various central police, paramilitary and intelligence agencies and used extensively in the repression of political revolutionaries and national minorities who dared to protest against unjust social conditions. The various tortures and brutalities often ending in death which were and continue to be employed against the people in the name of "curbing Naxalites" or "ending secession by Nagas and Mizos" would fill several volumes.

What was revealed in Bhagalpur Jail is thus only the tip of the iceberg. Appointing commissions or committees of enquiry into this episode will address the real problems no more than a band-aid will cure a cancerous sore.

## Brezhnev Visit: Did He Get What He Wanted?

Brezhnev's visit to India in December was significant because it took place at a time when the Soviet Union finds itself extremely isolated internationally because of its invasion of Afghanistan. That Brezhnev should have undertaken this visit despite his reported and obvious ill-health underlines the importance attached by the Soviet Union to its relations with India. One of the major aims of the Delhi visit was to win stronger Indian support for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The other important objective was to ensure the primacy of the Soviet Union in India's economic and defense sectors, and stopping any drift towards collaboration with the US and other western countries.

On Afghanistan, the Indian government has sought to condone the Soviet invasion on grounds of US-China-Pakistan interference in Afghan affairs. Even though India has not explicitly supported the Soviet Union, and has always stated its opposition to covert or overt intervention by outside forces in the internal affairs of the region, the fact that both India and the Soviet Union could join in a statement opposing outside interference in Afghan affairs seems to imply that the Soviet Union is not the outside force being referred to. In international forums, both at the UN and in the regional meeting of the Commonwealth countries, India has opposed attempts to condemn the Soviet Union and has reiterated the need to accommodate Soviet strategic interests. Brezhnev's visit, coming on the eve of the non-aligned ministerial meeting at Delhi in February, is likely to prepare India to play a subtle supportive role for the Soviet Union among the non-aligned countries most of whose members have condemned Moscow's invasion in categorical terms. In a recent interview in the Washington Post, Indira has blamed international condemnation of the Soviet invasion as a factor responsible for

the "hardening Soviet attitude."

While talking about the increase in "big power presence," such as in relation to Brezhnev's gulf plan, India singles out the US and the West for criticism. The communique issued at the end of the Brezhnev visit singled out in particular Diego Garcia, the Indian Ocean island on which the US has built a naval and air base, and condemned "any attempts to build up foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean under any pretext whatsoever." But the communique is totally silent on the massive presence of the Soviet navy and troops in and around the Indian Ocean; nor are there any references to the Soviet bases in the region. It cannot be said that India has expressed opposition to these in any other place or time.

The various deals and promises made by Brezhnev during this visit have ensured the dominant position which the Soviet Union enjoys in India's economic and defense sectors. The Soviet Union is now involved in over 70 projects in India, all of them in key economic sectors such as steel, oil refining and exploration, mining, etc. Despite the sluggish functioning and heavy losses of these projects and the fact the Soviet Union itself is looking towards the West for advanced technology, the massive economic deals announced by Brezhnev are expected to keep India tied closely to the Soviet Union. In the area of defense equipment, the Soviet influence over India is again evident by the lack of interest that marks the negotiations with American suppliers. Despite the proposed purchases of the Jaguar aircraft from European sources, India remains strongly linked to the Soviet military equipment and technology. The reported proposal to link the Soviet Union's and India's five year plans, if it materializes,

(continued on p.10)

## Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan—A Year Later

On December 27, 1979, the advance columns of 85,000 Soviet troops landed in Kabul, supposedly in response to an invitation from the Afghan government. On their part, the troops proceeded to assassinate the man who had "invited" them, Hafizullah Amin, the head of the government, install a puppet, Babrak Karmal, then living in Czechoslovakia, in his place, devastate large areas of the countryside with napalm, antipersonnel bombs and other deadly weaponry, and create a million and a half Afghan refugees who have fled to shelter in neighboring Pakistan and Iran. The Soviet Union for a number of years has claimed to be a natural ally and friend of third world countries in their struggle for freedom and independence. Afghanistan 1980 has demonstrated clearly what the actual manifestation of this friendship is.

The unmasking of Soviet imperialist intentions is shown by the two crucial votes in the

General Assembly of the United Nations on the Afghanistan issue. Resolutions calling for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops were passed by huge majorities with only the Soviet bloc countries voting against. India, to its discredit, abstained both times as the Gandhi regime continued to vacillate on the issue. However, the overwhelming opposition of the world's peoples has not so far made any difference to the ambitions of the Soviet rulers in the area. All indications are that the Russians are enlarging their commitment and investment and essentially annexing Afghanistan into another Soviet Asian Republic. The Afghan army has basically ceased to exist since many of its units were discovered to have more sympathy for the patriots than for the invaders. Its place has been taken by the Soviet forces who now number about 100,000. The government bureaucracy, or what remains of it, is run by Soviet advisers. The Russians are

enlarging existing military airports and building new ones, constructing oil depots and pipelines and generally preparing for a long stay.

Like many other imperialists in history, the Soviet Union believes that military superiority can assure control and domination. Afghan history, especially during the period of the British Indian empire, proves otherwise. After a year of aggressive search and destroy missions and other thoroughly brutal tactics of an occupation power, the Russians still control only a fourth of the countryside.

The Afghan patriots do not have a united leadership or coordination. The Soviet claim that they amount to a few bandits kept going by the CIA is too ridiculous to be believed. The patriots have no doubt suffered losses due to the disparity in mobility and firepower and the nature of the terrain which is not the most suited for guerrilla fighting. But

their spirit and determination is far from broken as the recent news of fighting suggests.

The Russian base of support in Afghanistan, very thin to start with, has narrowed further over the last year. The split between the Parcham and Khalq factions has deepened with the Russians backing Parcham. Several Khalq leaders have been executed or have fled into exile. The patriotic resistance to the brutal and terroristic actions of the Russians is bound to rise given this narrowing of their support among the Afghan elite.

The Indian government's stand on Afghanistan has been marked by vacillation and a desire not to offend the Russians. This appeasement cannot act as a force for peace and stability in the long run in the area, which is what the Indian government says it desires.

# 40,000 Beedi Workers on Strike in Bombay

## Women Demand Minimum Wage

Forty thousand beedi-workers in Bombay, mostly women, went on strike on September 15. The two major demands are the implementation of minimum wages and an end to the system of workers having to buy raw materials out of their wages.

Beedi-workers in Bombay, unlike anywhere else, are required to buy part of the raw materials - the tendu leaves and the thread - out of their own wages. In August, the wholesale price of fresh tendu leaves was Rs 6 per kilo, good for a little over 1000 beedis. (Aged leaves cost less but yield fewer beedis because of wastage.) The workers buy in retail and pay more. The wages vary from Rs 6 to Rs 8.40 for 1000 beedis, which take about 12 hours of work. Since the work is done at home, the workers get nothing besides the wage. Thus, as 7000 women complained to Indira Gandhi when she visited Bombay on October 10, their wages had come down to Rs 2 per day.

Two years ago, the Maharashtra state government issued a notification laying

down the minimum wage for "ghar-khep" (work done at home). This was Rs 8 per 1000 if all the raw materials - tobacco, leaf and string - were supplied by the beedi malik and Rs 11.50 if the workers had to buy the leaf and string (the price of tendu leaves was then Rs 3 per kilo). However, the minimum wage was never enforced by the factory inspectors. In the recent tripartite negotiations with the workers, maliks and the government, the factory inspectors and the Assistant Labor Commissioner did not know the total number of traders, maliks or workers in the business.

It is believed that one reason the minimum wage was not taken seriously was the official attitude that beedi-workers' wages are a "supplementary" income, women's work that puts the vegetables on the thali, while male income brings the dal-bhat. The union points out that it ignores the principle that all labor must get a just wage and that in fact there are many women whose wage is the mainstay of the family. The union is trying to raise funds to buy rations for such families while

the strike continues.

In the first meeting, the state labor minister agreed in principle that beedi maliks should supply the leaves and that the wage rate should be worked out after that. However, at the second meeting, Haribhau Naik, the minister of state for labor, dropped the question about leaves and focused on the wage. The maliks agreed to pay Rs 11.50 per thousand beedis but would not supply the leaves. Naik did not insist, arguing that a tradition of many years (that the worker buys the tendu) cannot be changed overnight.

The union, however, wanted a negotiated wage rate and all raw materials supplied by the beedi maliks. It wanted the Tidke formula restored as the basis of talks: that beedi maliks supply the leaves and that the talks start from the minimum wage set two years ago of Rs 8 per 1000 beedis. The union, therefore, rejected the proposed settlement.

(information from an article by Amrita Abraham in E & PW)

## B & C MILLS THREATEN TO SHUT DOWN

The management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Tamil Nadu has threatened to close down the mills from January 1, 1981.

The B&C Mills employ about 13,000 workers. The management claims to have had a financial crisis for some time; the loss during 1979-80, according to the owners, was Rs 30 million. A government committee has recommended drastic lay-offs, cuts in pay and increases in productivity. There have been demonstrations in Madras by some workers demanding a government take-over.



## Industrial Relations in Maharashtra

It has been reported in the press that the industrial relations climate in the Bombay industrial belt has improved considerably since Antulay became chief minister. He is said to have been able to carry out his policy of ensuring that industries continue with their normal production while workers get due justice.

### PREMIER AUTOMOBILES

A major intervention by Antulay was in the Premier Automobiles. He has awarded a settlement for the next three years. The workers will get about Rs 150 a month extra. The raises are linked to the workers agreeing to operate a third shift and produce 72.6 cars a day, up from the level of 52 cars in two shifts a day before the work stoppage last March. Also, no wages have to be paid for the duration of the work stoppage.

On the question of representation, the majority union, led by Datta Samant, will not be recognized. The Premier Automobile Employees Union, regarded by many workers as pro-management, is the only union the management has to deal with. Further, Further, the company has been told to "keep out" all workers against whom criminal cases have been registered. This will cover about 30 activists of Samant's union.

Observers believe that the management could not have asked for more. The settlement is for three years. The additional payments will be compensated for by the wages saved during the work stoppage period. The workers are committed to a production in-

crease and a night shift. The management has to deal only with its favorite union; the most militant workers have been kept out.

### UNIONS COMPLAIN

Unions complain that the government is doing nothing about factory closures, which they believe are used by the management against the workers. There were 166 closures in June alone.

The unions also complain about the inadequacy of legal machinery. At the end of 1972, the number of pending labor disputes in courts was 3,723. Six years later, the figure was 93,625. The lengthy procedures, according to unions, seem designed to grind down the will and resistance of the workers.

### LOCK-OUT IN KAMANI

A long dispute in Kamani Metals and Alloys climaxed on October 21 when the management declared a lock-out.

The scheme for production bonus at Kamani has been found unsatisfactory by the workers since 1975. The question was raised after the Emergency but remained unresolved. Negotiations reached a deadlock on August 25. One of the topics was the bonus for 1979, the previous year.

On September 6, the management announced a lock-out to begin on September 23. The reasons included slogan-shouting, drum-beating, demonstration, low production and refusal to accept trans-

(continued on p.7)

## Silicosis Kills Slate Workers Disease Caused by Dust Inhalation at Work

Amiya Rao

Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh, is the only place in the country where slate pencils are manufactured from Binota rocks. The pencils are made by sawing the slate, which produces dust containing silica. The inhalation of the dust over a period of time leads to the disease silicosis. According to reports by social services organizations, over 2000 workers have died in the last 20 years and several thousand more are on their way to death from the disease. About 10,000 workers, including 1000 children, are employed in the 100-odd slate pencil factories around Mandsaur.

A medical check-up by the Social Service Club of Indore in 1980 revealed that most of the children have got silicosis and will soon die. "We can't do a thing," says the civil surgeon. "The disease causes fibrous changes in the lungs. Lungs are gradually eaten away, patients suffer respiratory trouble, begin to spit blood and then die a painful death."

The Technological Institute of Indore has devised machines costing Rs 8000 with suction fans and dust collectors to remove the silica dust and save lives but none have been installed. The owners say they cannot afford it. The Labour Commissioner is reported to have said that the factories would go out of business if forced to install the machines.

The working conditions in the factories violate legal requirements: small ill-ventilated rooms laden with silica dust, tools without any safety devices, cloth masks made of such cheap, flimsy material

that they let in dust which in no time chokes the wearer. However, the government has not enforced the Factory Act even once.

Employment of children violates the Constitution (article 24) as well as the Factories Act (section 67); however, there are 1,000 children in the slate pencil factories.

### SUPREME COURT CASE

In September 1980, Kapila Hingorani, a Supreme Court lawyer, moved a writ petition before the Chief Justice of India on behalf of the workers of the slate pencil industries of Mandsaur against the state government and seven manufacturers.

In her application for "enforcement of Fundamental Rights under Article 32 of the Constitution," she makes several points. One is that workers "have the right to work under just and humane conditions and cannot be forced by economic necessity to work under conditions hazardous to their lives in violation of their fundamental rights under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution."

Section 87 of the Factories Act empowers the state government to regulate dangerous operations in a factory. Silicosis is a disease specified in the Schedule to the Act and the factory manager is required to notify the government if a worker contracts the disease. In this case, according to Hingorani, the state has abdicated these powers and endangered the workers' lives by allowing the manufacturers to operate without any safety measures.

(abridged from  
Econ. & Pol.

# India's Economy: Growth without Development

A-Azad

Among the larger nations in Asia/Africa/Latin America, India is an important example illustrating the case of economic "growth without development." By the conventional measures of overall income and production (output) there is apparently a clear indication that economic growth has taken place during the three decades from 1950 to 1980. Indeed it is correct to suggest that the decline and neglect suffered by the economy during the first half of the twentieth century was reversed and a particular momentum of economic growth was introduced and fitfully sustained during the first two decades since independence. The Indian experience of economic growth, while not requiring special emphasis, does need to be acknowledged through available sober documentation, as for instance in P. Chaudhuri's Indian Economy.

At the same time, since the late 1960's, there is a kind of common ground of describing the experience of economic change between varied analysts (Raj Krishna, B.S. Minhas, K.N. Raj, and Ranjit Sau) that something has gone wrong and the momentum of growth has changed to forms of stagnation and crisis. Of course the details amplifying and explaining the general description of the serious difficulties experienced by the Indian economy and the people of India differs sharply between the analysts and as such they often emerge as diametric opposites.

In order to clearly grasp the reasons for the growing difficulties of the Indian economy and the deteriorating level of life of the people, there are two interrelated aspects of contemporary India that require emphasis. First, the historical legacy of the Indian economy. Second, the structural 'direction' built into the economic strategy particularly through the agricultural and industrial programs carried out since independence.

The Indian economy at independence could be demarcated and described in terms of its two major parts:

(1) The rural economy of some half million villages and the smaller district towns where rajas, landlords and bureaucrats making up less than 1% of the population dominated the countryside. The rural kisan and mazdoor worked extremely hard to maintain the lavish lifestyle of the maliks. The bulk of economic activity was for self-consumption despite economic exchange having spread over considerable areas for certain type of products. The technical level of production was limited, simple and inexpensive.

(2) The urban economy built around large cities like Bombay and Calcutta plus the larger district towns constituted a rather small enclave of economic and industrial activity together by the urban and rural/external economy between the

administrative and military towns and the markets of the Empire (before independence) and the Commonwealth (immediately after independence). British and Indian industrialists/financiers together with the bureaucracy and the military dominated the clerks, workers and servants. The urban babu, mazdoor and naukhar worked long hours to support the westernized lifestyle of the sahibs. The bulk of the economic activity was a kind of mini-reproduction of capitalist production within the context of colonial/imperial market subordination while being tied to the sprawling and decaying rural economy.

In short the historical legacy of the Indian economy at independence was a system that exhibited agricultural backwardness, stagnant production and an arrested industrial sector. The received economic structure was one where a small segment of the affluent rural and urban population (approximately 3-5% of the total population) were dominantly influential in directing and shaping the rhythm and flow of economic activity.

The Indian economy as described in terms of its rural and urban segments can usefully be seen through its post-independence evolution in terms of four interrelated parts: (i) means of production sector, (ii) intermediate goods sector, (iii) luxury products sector, and (iv) mass consumption sector. In such a structure of economic parts the experience of economic growth in India shows that the bulk of products generated in sectors (i) and (ii) were used to produce products of sector (iii) and only a relatively small proportion went into the production of mass consumption goods. Clearly therefore the economic structure operates to mainly perpetuate the wants and interests of that minor section of India's population which controls the means of production and consumes luxury products.

What are the principal means developed and used in India to bring about its particular structure of economic growth? Since independence there have been four major means utilized in India's economic strategy: land reform of the 1950's, the green revolution in the 1960's, import-substituting industrialization, and export-led growth.

While some there is some merit in examining separately these four key aspects of India's economic strategy, they need to be seriously considered as comprising an integrated policy-cum-program serving the minority interest of India's rural/urban rulers and its government. From the Bombay Plan and Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee Report of the 1940's (pre-independence) through the Fifth Plan and now the Draft Sixth Plan, there exists a continuous thrust of consolidating the inherited economic structure. By strengthening the economic structure the government aims to expand

the benefits accruing to a slightly enlarged upper stratum (roughly 15 to 20% of the population).

Illustratively it is useful to briefly survey three economic policy/program areas. Information is summarized from Ashok Rudra's "Inequality and Economic Policies" (Frontier, Dec. 21, 1974, Jan. 18, Feb. 8, and March 15, 1975).

## PRODUCTION

Food, clothing and shelter are the usual basic needs of the people. If we examine some recent studies it is important to emphasize that the per capita availability of foodgrains was 166.5 kg/year in 1931-33, it fell to 123 kg by 1950-52, and then rose to 149 kg in 1970-72. The per capita availability of cotton cloth was 12.4 yds in 1931-32, fell to 9.9 yds by 1950-52 and rose to 12.7 yds in 1971-72. Housing conditions have generally deteriorated and are scarcer.

While essential needs of the people have hardly been met, there is considerable evidence to show that the production to meet the demands of the affluent have expanded rapidly. Refrigerators, radios, scooters and motorcycles, synthetic fibers, detergent, fluorescent lamps, breakfast foods and alcoholic drinks have all increased in production at an annual rate of 30% or more.

## EMPLOYMENT

The eradication of unemployment has been a national objective since the early 1950's. Yet the reality of India's employment policy has resulted in growing unemployment. For example, the Second Plan estimated that as a result of plan implementation, employment would increase by 8 million outside agriculture; the actual achievement was 6.5 million jobs. Unemployment went up from 5 million to 9 million. During the Fourth Plan, a "crash scheme for rural employment" was taken up with an allocated expenditure of Rs 500 million. A subsequent evaluation showed that 80% of the expenditure was incurred on communications. Consequently similar patterns of increased unemployment were registered during the third and fourth plans. By the time of the Fifth Plan, the government decided to discontinue the publication of unemployment figures. Real unemployment is presently estimated to be around 15 million.

## INVESTMENT

Production and employment in significant ways are derived from and based upon the pattern and level of investment. Planned investment levels reached their highest average levels of 13% (proportion of savings ploughed back into the economy) and then have fallen to a more or less stable level of 10%. Declining investment levels of course bring about a slowdown in the rate of economic growth, and this has been notably visible in industrial activity. More important than the simple slowdown of the growth rate of the economy is the particular em-

phasis of investment. For example, during the Fifth Plan, the government Rs 1500 million to set up new TV centers. The same plan makes a provision of no more than Rs 1050 million for slum improvement. Rs 1000 million were allotted for office and residential construction for central government employees.

The Fifth Plan proposed Rs 4870 million for 70,000 new telephone connections and Rs 3440 million for long distance communications. Postal services were to receive only Rs 575 million for improvement.

The examples cited above point to the fact that the pattern and direction of economic growth in India has continued to accentuate the unequal divisions of society. Not only have such divisions been aggravated but through this kind of an economic strategy the rural urban rulers of India have continued to buy time for the particular form of government that persists in India. No amount of agnosticism or mysticism can hide the reality of the economic performance in India, and its harsh impact on the majority of the people.

It is difficult not to agree with A.K. Bagchi, an eminent economist, when he says (in "Savings-Investment Process, Stagnation and Inflation," Frontier, Oct. 19, 1974), "the government's encouragement of unproductive expenditure in the form of defense, administration or relief, its willingness to accommodate every demand of the private sector for cheap credit, its unwillingness to tax the rural rich where the resources have increasingly drifted, its tendency to further cosset the urban rich by giving new relief to people paying income tax, its resort to deficit financing far in excess of the planned or safe limits, and its similarity of behavior with monopoly houses in further helping to raise the prices of essential commodities have created a situation where the government's writ (which is infrequent enough as far as the rich as concerned) has ceased to run for major sections of the population."

## AICC(I) Meets

The All-India Congress(I) Committee (AICC(I)) held its first meeting since the return to power of Indira Gandhi. The meeting, held just before Brezhnev's visit, was notable for the domination of Indira Gandhi and for the importance and support given to the issue of instituting a presidential form of government in India.

Rajiv Gandhi was present briefly at the meeting. He declined the request of H.K.L. Bhagat, Delhi Pradesh Congress(I) President, to sit on the rostrum or with the delegates; he sat in the visitors' gallery. Bhagat then pinned a distinguished visitors' gallery badge on Rajiv. While making his speech as the chairman of the reception committee, Bhagat made a vehement appeal to Rajiv Gandhi to join "active public life" to assist his mother and share the joys and sorrows of the party and the nation."

The meeting also revealed what issues dominate the concerns of AICC(I). While mov-

(continued on p.11)

# Does Foreign Investment Help Development?

## Study Casts Doubts

Susan George

Indira Gandhi unveiled plans in early September to attract more multinational enterprises to India by loosening restrictions on joint ventures and opening up new fields - most notably oil production - to foreign firms. India expects that foreign companies will bring much-needed investment, transfer superior technology and earn foreign exchange for its economy. A recent study by S.K. Goyal, "The Impact of Foreign Subsidiaries on India's Balance of Payments," published by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, casts doubts on these notions.

### FOREIGN CAPITAL?

With a vast internal market and a large stratum of skilled personnel, India is arguably in an excellent position to bargain hard with foreign investors. Far from profiting from multinational investment, however, India has been providing substantial development assistance to the companies - mostly US and UK based - by furnishing local capital for their establishment or expansion.

Multinationals actually arrive in India with very little cash in their pockets. Sometimes the government has supplied them with low-cost loans in rupees or even hard currency. More often, through the policy of Indianization declared in 1973, the government has required multinationals to turn to Indian business for financial capital through the sale of shares in subsidiaries, generally deemed smarter investments than national firms. Although some foreign companies protested this policy, and Coca-Cola and IBM even decided to leave rather than submit to it, other foreign firms have learned that Indianization can be a convenient bulwark against complete nationalization or stricter gov-

ernment regulation in areas such as profit repatriation or taxation. For instance, protests by Indian shareholders prevented the proposed takeover of Kaiser Aluminum.

### TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The "superior technology" transfer argument does not stand up to scrutiny either. In some industries like pharmaceuticals, the contribution of local branches is little more than repacking in small quantities bulk drugs imported from the parent firm.

Much of the advanced technology that comes into India tends to stay within the four walls of the multinational affiliate, where Indians work only as laborers and junior technicians. Parent companies take substantial precautions to keep their equipment from benefiting anyone but themselves.

Technology, furthermore, is not transferred but bought and sold. For every item that the parent company transfers, the local subsidiary makes payments out of the country's foreign exchange reserves. In the case of Imperial Chemical Industries, the technical collaboration agreement on polyester fiber involved the subsidiary's commitment of two million pounds in sterling for engineering and design charges incurred by ICI. This payment in addition to a 3.5% royalty on the value of all polyester fiber produced in India.

### FOREIGN EXCHANGE

In spite of export obligations placed on the subsidiaries to obtain an industrial license, their exports represent only 5% of their combined total turnover. Even these exports were not high technology products but were almost entirely made up of traditional agricultural products like tea, coffee, tobacco or hides and skins.

Further, of the 189 foreign-controlled companies examined in Goyal's study, just two (Brooke Bond and Unilever) earned a third of all the foreign exchange generated by foreign firms in 1975-76, while 29 earned none at all.

Although industrial exports by multinationals were extremely limited, this was perhaps a blessing in disguise, since those that did occur often took place at a net loss. A government commission estimated that because of transfer pricing, every dollar earned abroad by Phillips for manufactured items represented a net loss of 30 to 50% compared to the cost of production. Goyal says, "The practice of exporting goods to parent companies at a loss is obviously an indirect method of transferring resources from India, and the motivation for accelerating such exports is to defeat the spirit of foreign exchange regulations, no to promote Indian national interests."

What of the foreign-controlled companies' imports - what do they cost India in terms of hard currency? About 20% of their total remittances abroad were devoted to machinery, spare parts, interest, dividends, royalties and knowhow fees to their parent companies (machinery and spares may well have been overpriced, in another use of transfer pricing). But by far the largest component of imports was raw materials - over 50% of the total, even excluding oil imports. This indicates that multinationals were not taking full advantage, to say the least, of locally available raw materials.

Goyal's very conservative bottom line is that the activities of the 189 companies under review cost India a minimum of \$25 million in 1975-76 alone.

## New Oil Policy Favors Foreign Companies

Following the Indian government's decision to attract foreign investment, the Ministry of Petroleum has chosen 28 blocks on-shore and offshore to be entrusted to foreign oil companies for exploration on production-sharing basis.

Negotiations with the oil companies will begin soon; in all probability, operations will begin in the middle of 1981.

The government has done all it could to avoid impediments in meeting the requirements of the foreign oil companies. In this context, it is noteworthy that P.C. Sethi has replaced Veerendra Patil as the Petroleum Minister. It is believed that P.C. Sethi is more favorably disposed towards the foreign oil companies than his predecessor.

It is also of significance that the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) will not be allowed to participate in the exploration activities of the foreign oil companies. A special directorate will be set up within the Petroleum Ministry

instead to facilitate the operations of the foreign companies.

The government's present open door policy to the foreign companies marks a departure from its previous stance. In the late sixties and early seventies, foreign oil companies were prevented from refining and selling oil in India. They had also not been allowed to explore on land on the ground that they had generally failed to produce results. As a result of this, ONGC came to have a lion's share of the exploration. ONGC was then portrayed as well-equipped and self-sufficient to undertake exploration, especially on land. Even for offshore drilling, the policy preference was that it was better to let the oil remain underground till suitable arrangements could be made for its extraction by Indian agencies themselves by outright purchase of the needed equipment and hiring of foreign expertise.

However, after the global oil crisis in 1973, foreign oil companies were allowed to

supplement the exploration efforts of ONGC in offshore areas. Even then, the biggest multinationals were not invited. The association of ONGC with the operations and its right of access to data collected were stipulated. In the event of the foreign party dragging its feet, vacation of the allotted area was provided for. It appears that all these reservations and stipulations have been given up. The foreign companies do not have to provide any data to Indian agencies. On the contrary, the multinationals will even be entitled to use the data collected by ONGC and other Indian agencies.

The balance has clearly tilted in favor of the oil multinationals.

The government's new policy has caused considerable resentment in ONGC, especially among its technical cadre.

(information from article by B.M. in E & PW)

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN MAHARASHTRA

(continued from p.5)

fers. The Labour Commissioner intervened at this point. The management withdrew its lock-out threat. Negotiations continued, including the Labour Commissioner.

At a meeting called by the minister of state for labor on October 16, the management asked for a week's postponement. Then, on October 17 and 18, the customary advances for Dassehra and Id were not paid. The lock-out was declared on October 21.

### MUKAND STEEL

A different type of struggle is going on in the Kurla Steel Foundry of Mukand Iron and Steel Works. The company is quite profitable, so the disputes have not been on financial questions; instead, they have been on the workers' demands for a voice in interdepartmental transfers, placement in appropriate grades, working extra for absent workers, recruitment and productivity.

Heavy rains on August 22 flooded the rolling mills section leading to a layoff of workers. Workers claimed that the flooding was not a natural disaster but a direct result of negligence in the maintenance of the drainage system. So they demanded full wages.

When the rolling mills resumed on September 1, workers refused to forego their rest periods and fill in for absent workers, even if they were getting paid extra. The rest periods (one hour rest for one hour work because of the high temperature and heavy strain) are considered essential to avoid permanent damage to the workers' health. Management said this refusal disrupted the "normal working" of the department and threatened a lock-out on September 5. The Industrial Tribunal found the action illegal.

The next move came in the alloy steel foundry (ASF). The management announced its desire to retrench 139 workers, the reason being that the ASF had come into being mainly to supply track-links to the military, whose orders stopped in November 1979, rendering the workers surplus. The union pointed out that when the ASF was created, there had been no new recruitment, only transfers from other departments. The so-called surplus workers, therefore, had to be absorbed back in their original departments. The union got a stay of the implementation of the retrenchment.

## ONGC Staff Protests

The Association of Scientific and Technical Officials (ASTO) of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) has opposed the government's decision to seek the participation of foreign companies, including multinationals, in the oil exploration program in the country.

In a lengthy letter to the prime minister, the president of ASTO, A.K. Dixit, described the government's move as a "retrograde" and urged her to

(continues)

## Non-Aligned to Meet in Delhi Next Month

### Kampuchea Question May Dominate Preparations

The foreign ministers of 94 non-aligned countries will meet in New Delhi from February 9 to 12 for the mid-summit ministerial conference. The members of the coordination bureau will meet the previous week both at the official and ministerial levels to prepare for the conference. It is expected that both the preparatory as well as the ministerial meeting may be dominated by the question of representation of Kampuchea.

Most of the non-aligned countries do not recognize the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea, installed and currently being maintained by over 200,000 Vietnamese troops stationed in Kampuchea. However, all the Soviet bloc countries and a few countries in the non-aligned movement - like

Cuba, Viet Nam and India - have recognized the Heng Samrin regime. At the Havana summit meeting of the non-aligned countries in 1979, it was decided to keep the Kampuchean seat vacant thus denying the Pol Pot government its representation in the movement. However, at the subsequent 34th as well as the 35th sessions of the UN General Assembly, Democratic Kampuchea was overwhelmingly voted to be the sole legal representative of Kampuchea.

The coordination bureau meeting in Delhi will have to decide to keep the Kampuchean seat vacant as was done in Havana or choose one of the two contenders for the seat. A significant countries are expected to press strongly for an affirmation of the position

adopted by the UN. Other countries close to the Soviet Union, India included, are expected to lobby for the Heng Samrin regime.

It was widely reported at the time of the Havana summit in 1979 that Cuba as the host country manipulated the unseating of the government of Democratic Kampuchea by undemocratic methods. India as the host country this time will be watched closely on this issue.

The New Delhi meeting will also mark the 20th anniversary of the founding of the non-aligned movement at Belgrade in 1961. Special preparations are being made to celebrate this event. The non-aligned ministerial conference is also expected to make efforts to settle the Iran-Iraq conflict.

### Brezhnev Plan on Gulf Finds No Takers

President Brezhnev proposed a five-point plan with regard to the Persian Gulf region during his speech to the Indian Parliament. Directing his offer to the US, other Western powers, China, Japan and other interested nations, Brezhnev outlined his Gulf non-aggression pact. He said that the interested countries should agree not to set up foreign military bases in the Persian Gulf area and on the adjacent islands and should not deploy nuclear weapons there. The powers should pledge not to "use or threaten to use force against the countries of the Persian Gulf area and not to interfere in their internal affairs," and should not try to draw the Persian Gulf nations into "military groupings." Finally, he said that powers should agree "not to raise any obstacles or pose threats to normal trade exchanges and the use of sea lanes linking the states of that area with other countries of the world."

Soviet officials said that the speech marked the first announcement of the policy and that it represented a significant initiative. External Affairs Minister Narasimha Rao said that the proposal would have to be considered before India took a final view. He, however, noted Indira Gandhi's statement in Parliament that the Soviet proposals were "constructive and worthy of careful consideration." Rao added that to the extent that the proposals fell in line with India's thinking on issues such as a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, non-interference and non-intervention, India would naturally endorse them.

United States State Department officials said that as long as Soviet troops remained in Afghanistan, the US could not seriously consider reducing tensions in the Gulf area. "It is

### Desai Reveals Soviet Instigation Against Pakistan

Morarji Desai, former prime minister, disclosed at a public meeting in New Delhi that the Soviet leaders had tried to instigate India to "teach a lesson" to Pakistan when he was prime minister in 1977-79. He said he would not be surprised if they were inciting Indira Gandhi to raise a war threat from Pakistan, which fought three wars with India in the last three decades.

"Mrs Gandhi's statement at Rae Bareilly about the threat of war with Pakistan against the background of similar press reports made me decide to disclose in the best interest of our country and the subcontinent what the Soviets had asked me to do. I did not want our government to get instigated or pressurized," said Desai.

Desai's disclosure brought a categorical denial by the government in the Rajya Sabha. Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao stated that there had never been any suggestion "even obliquely" on the lines suggested by Desai.

Desai vehemently denied the suggestion that he was trying to sabotage Brezhnev's four-day visit and added, "We must have the best of friendly

relations with a strong independent Pakistan. That is best for both our countries and the subcontinent. I also wanted to ensure that Mr Brezhnev or any other Russian leader did not attempt such an exercise again since the Soviet forces are facing increasing trouble in Afghanistan from nationalists. They are certain to be forced to leave Afghanistan one day - as were the Americans from Viet Nam."

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union denied Desai's charges. TASS said Desai was seeking to "play into the hands" of certain circles who do not agree with Premier Indira Gandhi's policy of developing friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

A curious feature of the Indian political scene was revealed in connection with Desai's remarks. While discussing Desai's statement in Parliament, members belonging to various political parties - Congress(I), Congress(U), Lok Dal, CPI, CPM, Janata - all condemned Desai's "unfortunate statement." It seems that the influence of the Soviet Union on the Indian political scene was not limited to any one party.

ironic, to say the least, that Brezhnev should make such a security proposal when the continuing Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the chief threat to the security of the region." The State department said that the ideas were not new, were largely for propaganda purposes, and seemed aimed at increasing Soviet influence in the region. The US would have taken such proposals seriously three or four years ago. But since Afghanistan, the US has taken the position that the security in the region can best be enhanced by a major Western military build-up.

### VAJPAYEE CHALLENGES ZAIL SINGH

(continued from p.3)

members in the assembly. Its strength had since risen to 53 with the entry of defectors.

India's image in the international field had suffered because it had failed to take an unequivocal stand on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, he said.

Without weakening the bilateral relations with Russia, India should take a moral stand on military intervention by superpowers, Vajpayee said.

### Zia Wants Better Ties

Pakistan's desire to improve ties with India has been voiced by a number of high-ranking Pakistan government officials including President Zia in recent weeks. These comments come in the wake of the statements made by Indira Gandhi that the danger to the country from its neighbor is increasing.

President Zia, in his letter to Gandhi on the eve of her birthday, has stressed that his references to the Kashmir issue should not be mistaken for fading interest in Indo-Pak reconciliation. The fact that he continues to avail himself of every possible opportunity to press for a settlement of this problem did not deter him from pursuing steadfastly the more fundamental objective of improving Indo-Pak relations. The latest letter of Zia to Indira is seen as part of the process to prepare the ground for a more useful dialog later.

Pakistan's ambassador to India, Abdur Salter, has also spoken in line with Zia's views. Salter has been pleading for a better understanding of each other's concerns as part of their mutual desire for better relations. In a recent address at Ghaziabad, Salter made a pointed reference to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, implying that India should understand and appreciate the intensity of Pakistan's feelings over the occupation by a superpower of a neutral neighbor. The process of normalization, in his view, should reflect some shared perceptions of the imperatives of cooperation for the preservation of peace in the region.

Foreign Minister Agha Shahi spoke, at the time of Brezhnev's visit to India, that Pakistan was not in an arms race, conventional or nuclear, with India or any other country. "We would welcome talks with India for mutual assurances on this score and for the consideration of other confidence-building measures." Shahi said that the Indian government has been making baseless allegations that Pakistan was undertaking a major rearmament program and building an "Islamic" nuclear bomb. Pointing out that India has signed a \$1.6 billion arms deal with Moscow, Shahi hoped that the statements from India of a Pakistani military threat were not being made with Brezhnev's visit in view.

Indira Gandhi told Parliament early in December that the nation should be alert and vigilant as the danger to the country was increasing. She was replying to a question by a Congress(I) MP on acquisition of weapons by Pakistan.

Commenting on Indira Gandhi's statement about the increasing threat to India, former Premier Desai said she was creating a war psychosis by remarks about increased danger from Pakistan. Desai said Pakistan was not in a position to wage war with India. He said it was only a fear being created by Indira to divert the attention of the people from basic problems in India.

## Civil Liberties Union Gets Reorganized

Justice Krishna Iyer among New Members

The People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), founded by Jaya Prakash Narayan during the Emergency, is being transformed into "a broad-based, nonpolitical, membership organization." At a two-day convention held in New Delhi on November 22 and 23, PUCL adopted a constitution. The convention decided that members of political parties will be entitled to be members of the organization in their individual capacity if they subscribe to its aims and objectives.

Justice V.M.Tarkunde, retired justice of the Supreme Court, and Arun Shourie, executive editor of the Indian Express, were unanimously elected president and general secretary respectively. They were authorized to constitute a national council and an executive council in consultation with others. Justice Tarkunde said that Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer, just retired from the Supreme Court, had also consented to join PUCL.

At an earlier press conference, Nikhil Chakravarty, editor of Mainstream, Arun Shourie and Pran Chopra, a noted commentator, explained the objectives of the organization. They made clear that no political party would be allowed to dominate PUCL, whose basic objective would ever be "that civil liberties must be maintained in India, now and in the future, irrespective of any economic and political changes that may take place in the country." No more than ten percent of its office-bearers at the central or state levels would belong to a single political party.

At its two-day National Convention on Civil Liberties, it was decided to hold a national convention once a year to review the work of the organization and lay down policies and programs for the future.

In its aims and objectives, PUCL said that it would try to bring together all those who were committed to the defense and promotion of civil liberties irrespective of any differences which they may have in regard to political and economic institutions suitable for the country.

Prominent public figures such as Vijayalakshmi Pandit, N.A.Palkhiwala, C.K.Daphary, M.C.Chagla and Uma Shankar Joshi are reported to be among the sponsors of PUCL. Besides, most opposition leaders have also expressed support - Chandra Shekhar of Janata, Charan Singh of Lok Dal, Y.B.Chavan of Congress(U), Ram Jethmalani of Bharatiya Janata, and leaders of CPI, CPM and CPI(ML).

A resolution presented to the conference said that a new ominous feature had now surfaced: as assaults on civil liberties had become more overt and more frequent, officials, politicians and policemen had become more and more impatient with those trying to document the truth about these developments.

PUCL, since its inception, has undertaken investigations of incidents in which ordinary people's civil rights have been violated. Its work has been carried out in many parts of the country.



## Supreme Court Bar Deplores Efforts for Presidential System

The Supreme Court Bar Association, at an emergency general body meeting held in November, adopted a resolution appealing to all advocates, patriots and democrats to stand united to "repel all attacks on parliamentary democracy and independence of judiciary so that the liberty of the citizen and the rule of law are not reduced to mere playthings in the hands of the executive."

The resolution said that any amendment of the Constitution "to create a monopoly of power in the executive to appoint and transfer judges or chief justices, without consultations with the chief justices of the high courts or the chief justice of India and his colleagues can

only be used to establish 'star chambers' to replace courts in India so that judicial power merges in the power of executive and the liberty of the citizen is dead."

"The attacks on the independence of the judiciary is no less sinister than the attack on parliamentary democracy itself," the resolution said and added: "Serious moves are in contemplation to change the Constitution so that the Prime Minister of India is replaced by a President with no responsibility of accountability to Parliament or Courts."

"It is claimed that the Prime Minister must have all the powers of the President of the United States so that the unity

(continued on p.10)

## Supreme Court Criticizes Handcuffing

The Supreme Court has directed the superintendent of Nabha Jail (Punjab) to appear in court and "offer an adequate explanation for what apparently is gross misconduct" in sending a prisoner, Joginder Singh, a tuberculosis patient to the Supreme Court in handcuffs in connection with the hearing of a habeas corpus petition filed on behalf of the petitioner.

The Bench, consisting of Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer, Justice R.S.Pathak, and Justice O.Chinnappa Reddy, further directed that the two escort constables (who brought the prisoner to the court in handcuffs) should take him back without handcuffs.

"When we examined the escort police," the Bench said, "we gathered that the superintendent of Nabha jail had directed orally that this prisoner, a TB patient should be handcuffed and brought to the court and they merely obeyed him. This discloses a brutal disregard of the law and utterly inhuman disposition on the part of the superintendent."

The Supreme Court had ruled in the Prem Shankar Shukla case that prisoners should not be handcuffed when they were being taken between jail and court except in "the rarest of rare cases where security against the real danger of escape compels such a course."

"In spite of this direction

and law laid down by this court," the judges observed, "routinely the escort police take prisoners to court and back from court handcuffed as if we have an iron regime in this country which is contrary to the constitutional culture enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution [right to life and personal liberty]."

"While imprisonment is a punishment, treatment of prisoners who suffer from serious diseases is a basic obligation of the State out of regard for human rights. ... We cannot contemplate with equanimity callous indifference to prisoners' health by the jail authorities and we are surprised that this prisoner should have suffered such neglect at the hands of the jail authorities." The judges directed that the prisoner should forthwith be taken to the TB Hospital, Patiala, and kept there for proper treatment with necessary precaution regarding security.

Joginder Singh was brought to the Supreme Court in connection with the hearing of a habeas corpus petition through a letter addressed to the court filed on his behalf by a person alleging that the prisoner was deliberately transferred to Nabha Jail from Tihar Jail because he was a star witness in the Premchand torture case against prison officials. The petition also alleged that the prisoner was beaten up badly although he was a TB patient in an advanced condition of illness.

## MP Wants Convicts Branded

J.K.Jain, Congress(I) member of the Rajya Sabha, has proposed the branding of criminals with an appropriate tattoo mark like thief, dacoit, murderer, rapist, smuggler, economic offender, bribe taker and adulterator on the face.

In a letter to the prime minister, the MP urged a provision in the criminal law for this in order to put the fear of social boycott in criminals. In the letter, Jain said crime was on the increase and law and order was deteriorating be-

cause the criminals were not afraid of the police or of the punishment imposed by the courts.

He said there was provision in ancient days for chopping arms and legs of those committing crimes, but he did not favor that kind of punishment as it was inhuman and was not in consonance with the democratic way of life.

The branding should be apart from other punishment the courts might order, Jain said.

## P.C. Joshi Dead

P.C.Joshi, an important leader of the Communist Party of India, died in New Delhi on November 9. He had been ailing for a long time from heart problems.

Joshi was the first general secretary of CPI, from 1943 to 1948. At the second Congress of the party in Calcutta in 1948, he was replaced by Ranadive when the party officially "expelled all reformists." This led to a downgrading of his position in the party.

Since then he was not in the top leadership of the party even though he had a considerable following.

Joshi was known in India for his People's War thesis, developed by CPI following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's Germany. The thesis stressed the necessity of supporting the British government in its struggle against worldwide fascism.

Joshi is also considered to have been the first to formulate the policy of allying with the progressive sections within the Congress party with Nehru as the leader to defeat the reactionary section led by Patel. Analysts believe that this thesis became ultimately the line for alliance with Indira Congress, which CPI has followed in the past decade and more.

In later life, in view of his long and intimate involvement with CPI as well as his long relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru, JNU invited him to be an honorary professor, supporting him financially to write a history of the communist movement in India.

P.C.Joshi was married to Kalpana Joshi who, as Kalpana Das, was a famous revolutionary terrorist in Bengal during the independence movement.

# Brezhnev in India

## Makes Wide-Ranging Economic Deals

### Oil, MIGs, Nuclear Fuel

Wide-ranging economic and military deals have been made between the Soviet Union and India during the visit of Brezhnev in December. The deals range from extensive industrial collaboration to supplies of fuel for nuclear power plants. Increased supply of crude oil and petroleum products have been promised. In defense, the Russians will supply MIG-25 reconnaissance aircraft, MIG-23 jets, and T-72 tanks. A separate agreement covers five years of increased trade beginning this year. The offers also include help in mining coal, in exploring for oil, in refining, and in building power plants. Both governments were also reported to have agreed to coordinate their five year plans. Brezhnev's visit and the extensive economic agreements are seen as an obvious attempt to retain, if not strengthen, the close relationship between India and the Soviet Union.

Details of the agreements and protocols have not been revealed, but the outlines made known indicate that the Soviet Union is attempting to check any drift towards economic collaboration with the West.

The Soviet Union has agreed to supply more than 23 million tons of oil and petroleum products to India over the next five years, in ex-

change for other commodities. Under the Indo-soviet trade plan for this year, the Soviet Union will supply India 1.5 million tons of crude and 1.9 million tons of petroleum products. Next year, they are to go up to 2.5 million tons of crude and 2.25 million tons of petroleum products. No increases are contemplated beyond 1981.

The Soviet Union has agreed to supply MIG-25 reconnaissance aircraft to India, according to press reports. It is not known if it is part of the \$1.6 billion arms deal signed in May. It is also reported that India will get new up-to-date MIG-23 jets and T-72 tanks. The Soviet terms include a 17 year credit, seven more than India has been able to get from the West. The MIG-25 is capable of flying at a speed of nearly 1800 mph and achieves a maximum height of about 21 miles in little more than 4 minutes. A few weeks ago, it was reported that India had decided to buy the Soviet AN-32 medium transport aircraft for its armed forces.

In view of the Soviet offers, India may revise downward its intended purchases of military equipment from the West. The Indian Express reported that President Brezhnev expressed dismay at India spending foreign exchange on equipment that the Soviet Union could supply for rupee payment. India has earlier

concluded a \$1.6 billion deal with the British Aerospace Company for the purchase of Jaguar strike aircraft. A recent delegation recently visited the US to discuss the purchase of light M-198 155-mm Howitzers and anti-tank missiles under two proposed contracts worth over \$280 million. Some of these may be scrapped.

Details of the new Indo-Soviet trade agreement have not been published. But it is predicted that the trade exchanges will reach a record high total of \$13 billion during the next five years compared with an estimated \$6.5 billion under the 1976-80 agreement. Crude oil and petroleum products account now for nearly 65% of India's total imports from the Soviet Union. Commodities that India can supply in exchange for oil are reportedly under consideration. Moscow is known to be interested in grains; India already exports rice to the USSR for supplying the Vietnamese.

The new agreements signed during Brezhnev's visit include the setting up of a major public sector steel plant at Visakhapatnam. Over the past 25 years, the USSR has become involved in over 70 public sector projects in India. Brezhnev's visit appears to have insured Soviet dominance, if not monopoly, of India's economic and military development.

### Brezhnev Visit:

(continued from p.4)

will take India deeper into the sphere of Soviet influence.

Given the objectives of Brezhnev's visit, it appears that the Soviet Union has largely succeeded. India remains the only country outside the Soviet bloc which has joined with the Soviet Union in calling for no outside interference by others in Afghanistan, thus condoning the reality of Soviet interference there. However, the fact that the Soviet Union could not win India to more explicitly express support indicates the presence of elements of opposition to the Soviet invasion as well as India's own fears of getting isolated among the community of non-aligned countries.

### Supreme Court Bar Deplores Efforts for Presidential System

(continued from p.9)

and integrity of India could be maintained," the resolution observed and added, "For the same reason, a manipulated judiciary is also the chosen objective of the rulers, finding themselves utterly inadequate to rule within the norms of honesty and integrity expected in public life to deserve the love and affection of our people in a democracy."

The Supreme Court Bar also adopted a resolution in disapproving "strongly the attack on parliamentary democracy" by the chief minister of Maharashtra, A.R. Antulay.

### Demonstrators Protest Brezhnev Visit

(continued from p.1)

demonstrators burned a picture of Brezhnev. Besides demonstrations, there were posters all over the city with slogans such as "Keep Off Afghanistan and Poland," and "Russia's Hitler Go Back." About 200 police stood behind specially erected steel barriers and kept the protesters away from the Soviet embassy gates.

A group of Congress(U) members were not allowed to hand in a protest letter to the embassy, but stuck one on the building wall. It said: "Yesterday we supported the valiant people of Viet Nam in their struggle against US imperialism. Today we are similarly opposed to Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea and the occupation of Afghanistan by your country."

Dr Subramaniam Swamy, one of five MPs in the protest outside the embassy, told the gathering: "This country is very unhappy with the Soviet action in Afghanistan."

Maximum security was mounted around Brezhnev during the four-day visit. No public appearances were scheduled that would have brought him into contact with the public. A civic reception scheduled for the lawn of a historic fort in Old Delhi was shifted to an indoor conference center.

About 25 Afghan youths were detained on December 8 at Delhi airport, when they arrived from Lahore, allegedly for not having proper documents. The government also ordered about 100 Afghan refugees in India to stay home during the visit.

Five opposition members of Parliament sent an open letter to Brezhnev in which they equated Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to the colonization of India by the British: "You have in defense of the aggression on Afghanistan claimed that you were invited by the Afghan regime. ... The British made use of these 'invitations' on a large scale in the 18th and the 19th centuries to occupy the land." In their letter, the MPs also stated, "The fact that your aggression against Afghanistan is every day turning more and more bloody and brutal, the regime you have propped up cannot remain in power even in the capital of the country without your active military support, that the Russian soldier in Kabul streets is a hated symbol of this aggression, all are irrefutable evidence that the Afghans consider you as an invader." The letter was signed by Jaswant Singh, Bhai Mahavir, Jagdish Mathur, Dhaneshwar Manjhi and Sheik Abdul Rehman.

While leaving Delhi, Brezhnev departed amid tight security precautions, with a Soviet driver at the wheel of the Indian presidential limousine and policemen lining the route to the airport at 50-yard intervals. The route to the airport was kept secret.

## Wants More Indian Support on Afghanistan

Soviet President Brezhnev defended his country's invasion of Afghanistan in talks with Prime Minister Gandhi. Brezhnev reportedly told her that the United States and Pakistan were continuing to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan and that consequently Soviet troops would not be withdrawn. According to the Soviet spokesperson Leonid M. Zamyatin, Brezhnev told Indira that "when the reasons for the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan disappear, there would be no reason for them to remain there." But he added that those reasons were in fact "intensifying."

A spokesperson from the Indian foreign ministry was asked whether Indira Gandhi had called on Brezhnev to withdraw the troops in Afghanistan. He replied that India's stand was that it did not condone "any type of foreign intervention or interference or any type of domination" by one country over another. "At the same time," he added, "India recognized that international situations could develop because of interaction of events and forces which may bring about such a situation."

At a banquet in honor of the Soviet President, President Sanjiva Reddy expressed concern at the regional conflict produced by the Afghan situation. Referring to India's ambitions for economic develop-

ment, Reddy said that India had a vital stake in the peace of the region surrounding it and was seriously concerned by being surrounded by new tensions. "We in India remain opposed to any form of intervention, covert or overt by outside forces in the internal affairs of the region." Reddy said India hoped that durable peace could be restored through negotiated political settlements that fully respected the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of the countries of the region.

Zamyatin said the Soviet Union was doing all in its power to promote a political settlement of the Afghan question. He said such a solution must be based on the proposals put forward by the Soviet-installed government of Karmal last May. These called for direct talks between the Karmal regime and Pakistan and Iran leading to a "guaranteed end to foreign interference" - a euphemism used by the Soviet Union to refer to the internal opposition to the regime in Kabul. The Islamic countries have rejected this approach since such talks would only serve to give some legitimacy to the Karmal government.

From reports on Brezhnev's talks with Indira Gandhi, it appears that both countries have essentially reaffirmed their respective views on the situation.

## A Reply

Sadhu

About us you have so much to say  
Yet subtracting from it what may be good  
We find your sum remains quite unchanged

Come let us exchange opinions  
We too have a few things to say about you

You say we cannot change our ways  
But the changes we make coming from our village to Vancouver  
You haven't changed so much in three hundred years  
Our sarees and salwars don't fit the body of a borrowed culture

But do tell: did you ever live in tepees  
Or rain-dance with feathers in your hair?

So much of our life is unpleasing to you  
Where then are the stilts of freedom and rights  
Standing on which you look about so tall in the world?

We have the right of course, to "do our thing"

But how strange that his turns out to be  
The "inalienable right" to imitate you  
Does your freedom wear out so much in passing down to us?

Behind all that you say is a philosophy we call:  
The ox belongs to the owner of the stick.  
Whenever things go wrong  
Your finger pointed at us saves the day for you

We who toil with our hands  
Have made the wonders of the world  
We beg nothing

We left behind the plough and the yoke  
We left our axe and saw  
And all with which we built our lives  
Behind us is the cry of peacocks  
At sunset in sugarcane fields  
Leaving behind the afternoons of village sports  
We settle down to the programmes on TV  
The water in our walls steaming in the morning  
Was not less sweet than these sauna baths and health spas

Granted we come here running from hunger  
Because rulers leave nothing in our toiling hands  
But are you any less, we wonder  
Wiping your floors, picking your berries  
Pulling lumber in your mills, driving your  
Taxis and washing your dishes  
Our skins ripped from our bodies  
To our exhausted ears you sing  
The chorale of your infinite favours  
In our village we ask such people to wash their faces in the ditch

What if we still haven't heard of our rights  
What if we haven't yet poured our strength  
Into that fist of toilers which will smash your head  
When we hold our rights in our hands  
And raise our arms with the working class  
Your smallness will be less than the speck of dirt tickling our ears

What if today you dance with boots on our heads  
Remember that you shall fall from the air  
We are people whose feet are planted in the earth.

(translated by Chinmoy Banerjee)

## Sahir Ludhianvi Passes Away

Sahir Ludhianvi, noted lyricist and poet, died at Bombay on October 25 after a heart attack.

Born into a Ludhiana family of landlords in March 1931, Sahir rebelled against the feudal system in his youth. He was drawn into the freedom struggle while studying at the Khalsa High School and the Government College in Ludhiana.

His major works have been Talkhian (1944), a volume of poems which ran into 23 editions in Urdu and 12 in Hindi, Parchaia (1956), a long poem on world peace, and Taj Mahal, a tribute to the nameless artisans who died for the glory of Taj Mahal.

Before coming to Bombay in the mid-1940's to write lyrics for the film Naujawan, Sahir used to edit Azad-e-Lateef, a magazine published from Lahore. Some of the memorable films for which Sahir wrote lyrics were Pyaasa, Jaal,

Kabhi Kabhi, etc. His songs for plays and films have been collected in Gata Jaye Banjara.

Sahir's work reveals human feelings in a socio-political context. His death will be mourned even among those who do not know Urdu in India and Pakistan alike. He will be alive in his work for a long time.

### DATTA MANE DIES

Datta Mane, 58, the noted Marathi film director, died in Bombay on October 29 following a heart attack.

ing a resolution on the economic situation, the Maharashtra chief minister A.R. Antulay reiterated the call for evolving a new system of government, namely the presidential form, "more suited to Indian conditions." Rajasthan's chief minister Pahadia said the constitution should be amended to provide for a stable system of

## The Monkey and Crocodiles

Suniti Namjoshi

[Suniti Joshi picks up old fables, fairy tales, legends, and by retelling them with a slight twist, exposes the prejudices against women which pervade them. Often, she uses the same language as the original storyteller did, but by changing the events slightly, gives this language ironic meaning.]

ferry you over." "No," she said, "I don't want to go to the other river bank. I want to follow this river to its ultimate source." "That's dangerous," said the crocodiles. "Why?" said the monkey.

"There are beasts along the way. They'll eat you up." "What sort of beasts?" asked the monkey suspiciously.



A monkey used to live in a large jamun tree which grew on the banks of the river Yamuna. The fruit of this tree was unusually delicious and a bit like plums. At the foot of the tree lived two crocodiles. The monkey and the crocodiles were very good friends. The monkey would feed the crocodiles plums and the crocodiles in return would make conversation. They also protected her - though she did not know it - by keeping a watchful eye on her.

The day came when the monkey began to feel more and more restless. "I'm off," she said, "to explore the world." "Here, jump on my back," said one of the crocodiles, "and I'll

"Well they are long and narrow with scaly hides and powerful jaws." "I don't understand," said the monkey. "Don't go," said the crocodiles. "But I want to find out and see for myself." "Beware of the beasts," said her friends the crocodiles.

The monkey set off. Seven years later she hobbled back. She had lost her tail, six of her teeth, and one eye. "Did you find the source of the river Yamuna?" "No," said the monkey. "Did you encounter the beasts?" "Yes," said the monkey. "What did they look like?" "They looked like you," she answered slowly, "When you warned me long ago, did you know that?" "Yes," said her friends and avoided her eye.

(reprinted from Manushi)

## World Tamil Meet in Madurai

The Fifth World Tamil Conference will be held in Madurai from January 4 to 10 under the auspices of the Tamil Nadu state government and the International Tamil Research Institute. An exhibition picturing the ancient civilization, culture, artistic wealth and literature of the Tamils and a tableaux depicting various scenes from Tamil literature will form the highlight of the conference.

Nearly 700 delegates, half of them foreigners, and 3500 observers, mostly Tamil scholars, are expected to attend. Research symposia, and dis-

cussions on Tamil culture, Tamil development, language and literature will be held on all seven days.

Coinciding with the conference, it has been proposed to install statues of many Tamil scholars: Thiruvalluvar, Tholkappiyar, Robert D'Noble, Pandithurai Thevar, Desia Vinayagam Pillai, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaram, T.P. Meenakshisundaram, Somasundara Bharati, Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai, Thani Nayagam Adigal, and Veeramamunivar.

### AICC(I) Meets

(continued from p.6)

government, as leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi would not be there for ever. Several members also suggested that the government reimpose an Emergency rule "to curb the activities of the anti-social elements." But the suggestion was not included in resolutions.

The working committee decided that the party should be called Indian National Congress(I). The parenthesis is not there now; it presumes refers to Indira. The working committee was presided over

tion  
viet  
200

## Dange Retains Hold over AITUC

S.A.Dange was reelected as the president of the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) at its recent conference held at Visakhapatnam. Indrajit Gupta, a CPI MP, was elected general secretary. Roza Deshpande, Dange's daughter who broke away from CPI to form the All-India Communist Party (AICP) was not reelected to her post as treasurer; she was, however, included in the working committee of AITUC.

On the eve of the AITUC conference, there was speculation as to a possible split in the organization because of the differences between Dange and the CPI leadership. CPI controls the functioning of AITUC. Dange, who has ceased to be CPI's chairman but continues to be a member of its national council, sought to retain his hold over CPI's central trade union organization.

CPI convened its national council meeting (at Vijayawada rather than at Delhi) a week before the AITUC conference to discuss, as a key issue, their attitude to the Dange leadership of AITUC. It is believed that CPI was willing

to accept it while denying any role for the dissidents in his group, particularly for those who have openly left CPI to form AICP. From the conclusion of the conference, which elected Roza Deshpande to the working committee while not reelecting her as treasurer, it appears that both the CPI leadership and Dange's dissident group have opted for a compromise.

From available reports, it is clear that the formation of AICP has not resulted in any substantial loss of membership to CPI. Less than 5,000 or 6,000 out of a total CPI membership of 450,000 are reportedly with AICP. It is generally believed that the differences between Dange and the CPI leadership on Congress(1) and Indira Gandhi and on their attitude to CPM will be resolved within CPI itself rather than giving rise to any formal divisions in the organization. This may explain why Dange has remained within CPI despite his differences with the leadership while some of his followers led by his daughter have gone out to form AICP. The continued presence of a large number of Dange's followers within CPI may explain his continuing influence within it and in AITUC.

## Farmworkers Support Night in Montreal

A lively gathering of 300 people attended a public program to support the Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU) on December 5 at the Atelier Populaire in Montreal.

Among the speakers were Raj Chouhan, president of CFU, and Jean Claude Parrot, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Parrot, in his opening remarks, said that all Canadian working people and others must come forward to support the unorganized sectors of the Canadian working class - and the farmworkers represented the most exploited section of the working class. He said it was his duty to join the picket lines in British Columbia alongside his East Indian brothers and sisters when they launched their struggle to obtain contracts.

Raj Chouhan said that it was support committees like the one in Montreal "that formed the backbone of the union. It

is a young union and it needs programs like these to keep the movement growing." The union needs around \$85,000 for the next year to meet its organizing activities. He hopes that more such programs would be held in the near future.

Members of the local unit of IPANA presented folk songs from India, followed by folk songs from Bangladesh and Punjab by local compatriots. Diane Shea, convenor of the Farmworkers Support committee in Montreal, expressed her thanks on behalf of the committee to the local unions and community groups that co-sponsored the night. All the major unions and community groups participated in the program.

The evening was capped by a live reggae band - the J.R. Express - who had the audience on their feet till 2 in the morning. More than \$1300 was raised.

### INDIA NOW

**President:** Harinder Mahil,  
Editor of Chipper,  
Publication of International  
Woodworkers of America  
(Local 1-357)

**Secretary:** Hari Sharma,  
Associate Professor  
of Sociology  
Simon Fraser University, BC

INDIA NOW is published every month by  
IPANA, P.O. Box 665, Cathedral Station,  
New York, NY 10025, USA.

Annual subscriptions are \$5 in the US and  
Canada, \$12 overseas.

For institutions and libraries, subscriptions  
are \$12 in the US and Canada, \$15  
overseas.

Correspondence from Canada and  
overseas should be sent to IPANA, P.O.  
Box 37, Westmount, Quebec H3Z 2P1,  
Canada.

## Govt Intervention Leads to Cancellation of World Conference Demanded Change of Theme

The Congress of the World Future Studies Federation that was to be held in New Delhi in November has had to be cancelled. The conference had been scheduled under the Janata government and was to have been jointly sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the Center for the Study of Developing Societies.

The theme had been established as "Future Societies: Power, Life Style and World Order." According to Romesh Thapar, a vice-president of the world group, Indira Gandhi's appointee on the social science research council dis-

approved of some of the guests and the subject matter, and wrote to Eleonara Masini, secretary-general of the future studies group, urging that the meeting be postponed and that instead of "politically controversial" subjects, the central themes should involve science and technology.

According to Thapar, the demands of the government would have meant cancelling invitations to eminent international scholars. Among them were Robert J. Lifton, an American educator and psychiatrist, and other scholars from Japan, Britain, France, Poland, Brazil, the Philippines and East Africa.

The international group's executive committee decided to cancel the meeting and rejected an offer from the Indian government to let it meet in New Delhi with a modified agenda.

## ONGC Staff Protests Invite to Oil Multinationals

(continued from p.7)

decision in the long-term interests of the nation.

"Starting virtually from scratch in 1959, ONGC is today one of the giant oil companies of the world, producing 9.88 million tons of oil and over 1,884 million cubic meters of gas a year. Our scientists, drillers and engineers are held in high esteem and are in great demand overseas," he said.

Dixit asserted that ONGC was in a position to take up the challenge of an accelerated oil exploration drive. He was confident that it could achieve the results in the shortest possible time. "With our vast experience in exploration, it will not be in the interests of the nation to ask multinationals to exploit India's petroleum resources on oil-sharing basis."

## Security Ordinance Becomes Law

(continued from p.1)

tives for the protection of prisoners made by the Supreme Court last year would be put into effect without delay.

## NEW INDIA BULLETIN

(A Publication of IPANA)

Contains a comprehensive analysis of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Indian society, and India's relations with other countries. Also included are statements and reports of progressive organizations in India.

### INDIA NOW

C/O IPANA  
P.O. Box 665  
New York, NY 10025

**BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
New York NY  
PERMIT No. 5660**



EXPIRED 1280 D 2200  
HUNDAL, SUKHWANT  
6306 SOPHIA ST  
VANCOUVER  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ as one year's subscription to India Now and New India Bulletin.  
Name.....

Address.....

US subscribers please mail to the New York address.

Canadian and overseas subscribers please mail to the Montreal address.

Annual Subscription \$5.00

A 24 Foreign Air Mail \$12.00

ber 5 cam,  
pronouncen,  
chief minist  
ernment mig

**Central Office IPANA**  
P.O. Box 69646, Stn. "K"  
Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada V5K 4W7

Albany: Box 22940, Stn A  
SUNY Albany, NY 12222

Boston: P.O. Box 120, MIT Branch  
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Montreal: P.O. Box 37  
Westmount, Que. H3Z 2P1

New Jersey: P.O. Box 8  
Oakhurst, N.J. 07755

New York: P.O. Box 665  
New York, NY 10025

Saskatoon-Regina: P.O. Box 7404  
Saskatoon, Sask, S7K 4J3

Toronto: P.O. Box 223, Stn. S  
Toronto, Ont.